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Advocate of Peace.

VOL. LXVIII.

BOSTON, JUNE, 1906.

No. 6

THE AMERICAN PEACE SOCIETY,

PUBLISHERS,

31 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

MONTHLY, ONE DOLLAR PER YEAR. TEN CENTS PER COPY

Entered at the Boston Post Office as Second Class Matter.

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The Protest in Congress Against Further Naval Increase.

To most people the protest in Congress last month against a new \$10,000,000 battleship and the present policy of ever-increasing expenditures upon the navy means very little. It is looked upon by them as nothing more than a factional debate in which the Democrats, supported by a few not very loyal men of the other side, were trying to discredit the Administration and make political capital for use in the elections next year.

But this is a very superficial view. It shows utter want of insight into the conditions which caused the protest to be made. What was expressing itself on the floor of the House of Representatives had practically no partisan significance. The men who led in it—Bartholdt, Burton and Tawney—were Republicans, and Republicans known for their general party fidelity, each of them chairman of an important committee. What was expressing itself was the growing feeling of dissatisfaction amongst thoughtful citizens everywhere at the continuance of a policy, at such enormous and ever-increasing cost, for which no real reason can be assigned.

The immense figures which set forth what the government is spending on armaments have become

known to the people, and they have grown so large that Congressmen themselves can no longer, even if they would, turn a deaf ear to their mute but mighty call for a halt.

In the debate on the naval bill Mr. Tawney of Minnesota, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, pointed out that for the fiscal year 1906 the army and the navy, including maintenance, have cost the nation \$199,702,081.44. Adding to this the sum expended on pensions, interest on the public debt created by wars, etc., \$175,957,638.02, and we have the total appropriations for war purposes, direct and indirect, for the single year, footing up the colossal sum of \$375,659,719.46. This is 63½ per cent. of the total expenditures. Mr. Tawney declared that for the fiscal year 1907 the government is to spend in round numbers about \$385,000,000 for war purposes, or about \$28,000,000 more than the total revenue received in 1897, exclusive of the postal revenues, the great increase being chiefly due to the enlarged outlay upon the army and the navy. The annual cost of maintenance of a first-class battleship he set down as \$634,255.54, of a second-class one as \$468,729.31, and of an armored cruiser as \$489,206.27. If these expenses continue to grow as they have done, there will be no escape, Mr. Tawney told Congress, from increased taxes upon the people. That is perfectly plain to anybody, and the country is at last awakening to the fact.

Mr. Burton of Ohio made an effort to have the \$6,000,000 item for the new 20,000 ton battleship (exclusive of armaments) to outdo the English "Drednaught" stricken from the bill. The building program of the navy, he said, was provided for for the next four years, and in view of the prospect that the relations of the nations in respect to armaments might be greatly changed by a general agreement at the second Hague Conference for limitation and reduction, he thought it most unwise to authorize the construction of this big ship. When the vote was taken his motion to strike out the item received 103 votes against 135 for its retention.

Mr. Bartholdt from Missouri, on the same grounds as those put forward by Mr. Burton, offered a resolution authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to defer the construction of the new ship until after the coming Hague Conference, and making it then optional. But this motion was also voted down, though it received a strong vote.

This latest protest in the House of Representatives,

which was much stronger than that led by Mr. Burton in the previous Congress, was of such a character and reached such proportions that its meaning cannot possibly be misunderstood. A few years ago an attempt was made by some of us to induce some member or members of Congress to take up the subject of arbitration and peace and make it an object of specific attention and effort, in some systematic way, as had already been done in the British House of Commons by Henry Richard and later by Mr. Cremer. But not a man could be found who showed the least disposition to do anything of the sort. But now, on the spontaneous initiative of Mr. Bartholdt, an Inter-parliamentary Arbitration Group has been formed in Congress and has grown in two and a half years to over two hundred members, who are actively engaged in strengthening and advancing arbitration as a substitute for war, not only in Washington, but also in coöperation with similar groups in other countries.

This is a very great advance, quickly made. It means much in itself, but much more when the fact is taken into account that behind it is a vast and rapidly growing popular movement, of which it is simply the most important expression. This movement is throwing its waves against the doors of every government and parliament, and many of them it has already entered and practically mastered.

It would be impossible to overestimate the significance of the vote of 103 against 135 cast for Mr. Burton's motion to strike out of the naval bill the provision for the big new battleship. A change of only 17 votes would have defeated the provision. This vote was not simply an approval of the principle of arbitration and international friendship: it was a direct attack upon the prevailing rivalry of armaments, the gigantic evil which is exhausting the peoples of the world and imperiling more or less all the higher interests of civilization.

Nor was it a mere passing spasmodic effort. It will be repeated again next year, unless in the meantime the coming Hague Conference shall make it unnecessary to do so. Congressmen are saying openly that they will never vote again to add another battleship to the navy. Seventy-five out of the 135 who voted against Mr. Burton's motion are reported to have declared that this is the last vote of the kind that they will cast. This may or may not prove to be true when the test comes. But in any event the hour of deliverance from the insane rivalry of armaments, with which all the best phases of our civilization are entirely out of harmony, is about to strike, and no efforts of those who would keep the barbarisms of the past alive can put back the hand on the dial plate.

This number is given up largely to the interesting proceedings of the seventy-eighth annual meeting of the American Peace Society.

The House of Commons on Armaments.

Even more worthy of note than the protest in our Congress against further increase of the navy was the unanimous adoption by the British House of Commons on the 9th of May of the following resolution, introduced by Mr. Henry Vivian of Birkenhead, one of the labor members:

"This House is of opinion that the growth of expenditure on armaments is excessive, and ought to be reduced. Such expenditure lessens national and commercial credit, intensifies the unemployed problem, reduces the resources available for social reform, and presses with exceptional severity on the industrial classes, and the House therefore calls upon the Government to take drastic steps to reduce the drain on national income, and to this end to press for the inclusion of the question of the reduction of armaments by international agreement in the agenda of the forthcoming Hague Conference."

Mr. Vivian supported the resolution in a short speech in which he said that he had offered it because the constituencies would expect something to be done to carry out the pledges made during the election, and because a declaration made by the British government would have a great effect on the other parliaments of the world respecting the "bloated armaments" now kept up. He was sorry that the Czar of Russia had not renewed in his recent circular the appeal for reduction of armaments made in his Rescript of 1899, and he hoped that the British government would take not a second or third but a leading place in the effort to bring about a reduction by international agreement of expenditures for war purposes.

Mr. Fenwick, a labor member from Northumberland, in seconding the resolution, declared that the security of the empire was not better than it was twenty years ago, though the cost of the "services" had doubled. He had long hoped that some government would face the subject boldly and courageously and bring about by international agreement a proportionate reduction of armaments. The government that would do this would win the eternal gratitude of the industrial classes of the country.

An effort to destroy the force of the resolution was made by Mr. Bellairs, who proposed an amendment to the effect that British naval supremacy must be maintained, and that it was inadvisable that the government should initiate a discussion of the subject of limitation of armaments, and that Great Britain must wait for other powers to move in the matter.

The resolution was objected to by other members, including Ex-Premier Balfour, who declared himself ready to follow suit, if foreign nations were prepared